

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Entry of the foregoing amendment and reconsideration of this application are requested. Claims 1-4, 12, 15 and 16 have been cancelled, and claims 5-11, 13, 14 and 17-22 have been withdrawn. Claims 23, 25, 26 and 28 have been further amended, and claims 23-28 are currently pending in the application.

Claims 23-28 have been newly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacanin Jr. et al '704 in view of Asay '893 and Peterson '654.

Independent claims 23 and 26 now further define the interconnection of the shovel blades in more detail. More specifically, claims 23 and 26 now recite that the female connection part is similarly sized and shaped to slidably receive the male connection part along a line of direction that is substantially transverse to the lower edge portion of the shovel blade. These claims also recite the releasable coupling of the blades by sliding the blades in a direction parallel to the side edge portions. Furthermore, it is stated that the male and female connection parts, by themselves, define a sliding self-interlock for preventing exit of the male connection part from the female connection part.

Dependent claims 25 and 28 now further recite that the tube has a closed end portion engageable with the post for preventing sliding exit of the post from the tube.

The Examiner has previously applied the Jacanin Jr. and Peterson references in combination, and now newly applies Asay in that combination. Asay shows side extension blades 47 (Fig. 6) having pins 48 extending therefrom adapted to be received by sleeves 49 on the sides of the main blade 30. Pins 48 and receiving sleeves 49 have mating holes therethrough to receive spring clips 51 to lock the blade extensions 47 in place. (Column 5, Lines 25-39).

The Examiner contends it would be obvious to modify the connectable shovels of Jacanin Jr. to include male and female connection parts as taught by Asay to provide an easier more quickly assembled connection. The Examiner further contends it would be obvious to modify the connectable shovels of Jacanin modified by Asay to include male and

female parts extending longitudinally in a direction substantially parallel to the side edge portions as taught by Peterson to provide a connection formed by the transmission of pressure of a gripping member onto a receiving projection. Applicant, however, respectfully disagrees for the following reasons.

The Examiner should note that the applicant's blade interconnection is not a pressure or snap fit, but a sliding self-interlock defined by the male and female connection parts themselves. In contrast with the prior art, the female connection part of the present invention slidably receives the male connection part along a line of direction that is substantially transverse to the lower edge portion of the shovel blade. In applicant's arrangement, the shovel blades are releasably coupled together by sliding the blades in a direction parallel to the side edge portions.

In distinction with applicant, Jacanin Jr. , as modified by Asay, requires spring clips to hold the male and female connection parts together as the female connection part is received, along a line of direction which is parallel, not transverse, to the lower edge portion. Further, Asay teaches sliding the shovel blades together in a direction which is perpendicular, not parallel, to the side edge portions. Jacanin Jr. as modified by Asay does not teach or suggest a sliding self-interlock defined by Asay's male and female connection parts 48, 49. Jacanin Jr. as modified by Asay cannot prevent disengagement or uncoupling of parts 48, 49 without the use of clips 51. Clearly, the blade interconnection taught by the combination of Jacanin Jr. and Asay is structurally and functionally different than applicant's, and is not an easier and more quickly assembled connection.

Applicant has previously argued that Peterson would teach one skilled in the art to provide only a snap or pressure fit between a handle and a work element, such as a broom. Peterson teaches the transmission of pressure of gripping member 14 onto a receiving projection 13. More specifically, the combination of Peterson with Jacanin Jr. would result in the handle of the shovel being snap fit onto the blade, and not the snap fitting of two blades together. Peterson shows a raised portion 13 which extends longitudinally in a direction parallel to the top or bottom edge of the broom, but not the side edge. One would have to

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substantially modify what is shown in Peterson to arrive at applicant's invention since there is nothing taught in Peterson or in Jacanin Jr. regarding the use of male and female connection parts along the side edges of the blades, which parts are slidably interlocked along a direction transverse to the lower edge portion of the shovel blade(s). Peterson and Asay also fail to show or suggest sliding blades in a direction parallel to side edge portion to effect releasable coupling of the blades.

Dependent claims 25 and 28 now recite a closed end portion on the tube which is engageable with the post for presenting sliding exit of the post from the tube. None of the prior art taken, singly or in combination, shows such structure.

In view of the above, the Examiner is requested to withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and allow claims 23-28.

An effort has been made to place this application in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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